



Doing Business with DARPA

Since 1958, the Defense Advanced Research Projects Agency has pursued high-risk, high-payoff research initiatives across a broad spectrum of science and engineering disciplines to create game-changing technologies for U.S. national security. We define national security broadly, to extend well beyond military applications. Current programs encompass disciplines as diverse as applied mathematics, materials science, cyber defense, machine learning, and biological technologies. **But we look to YOU to tell us what's bubbling on the frontiers of your discipline, and what the next big technology idea might be.**

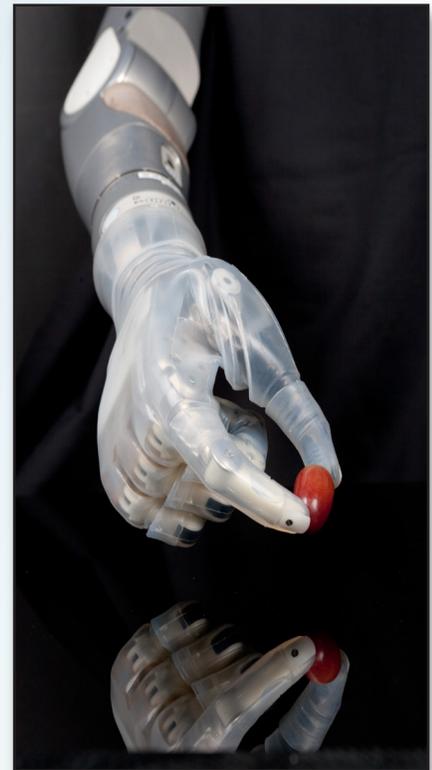
There are two basic ways to pursue your ideas with DARPA, both of which can benefit from an initial discussion with a Program Manager. Program Managers are the essence and core of DARPA. So especially if you are leaning toward proposing something entirely original, as opposed to responding to a specific need that DARPA has already identified, please communicate directly with one or more of them (see our website, <http://www.darpa.mil/about-us/offices>). Email, phone calls, or face-to-face meetings can help you explore how your concepts and ideas relate to DARPA's needs and translate those ideas into a substantive proposal via one of the formats discussed below.

Once you've crystallized your thinking, submit your proposal by responding either to an Office-wide Broad Agency Announcement (BAA) or an Individual Program BAA..

1. Office-wide BAAs

An Office-wide BAA is primarily used to fund small, short-duration exploratory projects we call "seedlings." Seedlings are typically 3- to 9-month projects that aim to answer a specific question and involve a very limited number of personnel. Seedlings help us determine whether "disbelief" in an idea's plausibility can turn into "mere doubt" – and remember that because DARPA is explicitly uninterested in incremental advances, "mere doubt" about the likelihood of success is a good place to be for a new DARPA program. The seedling ideas that you bring us today could lead to the next generation of program ideas.

Each technical office maintains (and typically updates annually) an Office-wide BAA that covers the range of that office's technical interests. Note that these general solicitations are intended to fund completely new ideas that are not connected with programs already underway or that are currently soliciting proposals.



An Office-wide BAA offers three ways to submit ideas: (i) executive summaries (typically two pages in length); (ii) abstracts (not to exceed five pages); and (iii) full proposals.

We recommend you start by submitting a two-page executive summary (ES), preferably after discussing your ideas with a Program Manager. Your ES will be circulated among all the Program Managers in the

For more information about the Defense Advanced Research Projects Agency please visit www.darpa.mil or contact outreach@darpa.mil.

DARPA's mission is to make the pivotal early technology investments that create or prevent strategic surprise for U.S. national security

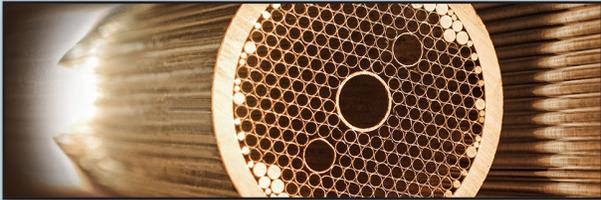
Distribution Statement A - Approved for Public Release, Distribution Unlimited

March 2017

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relevant technical office, and they will provide feedback to let you know if there is any interest.

Each BAA has a designated BAA Administrator, whose email you can find listed in the announcement on the DARPA website. If you do not get a timely response from a Program Manager or have other questions, please contact the BAA Administrator directly.



2. Individual Program BAAs

Initial seedling investments that bear fruit and are selected to become individual DARPA programs are announced by DARPA as Program BAAs, which the Agency posts on a rolling basis throughout the year. You can search for them on FedBizOpps.gov or grants.gov; in addition, most (though not all) appear on the DARPA website in the “Work with Us” section.

Instructions for responding to Program BAAs are included in those BAAs. Above all, please read the BAA carefully! If you have questions about the BAA, contact the BAA Administrator using the email address listed on FBO.

General Advice for Submitting New Ideas to DARPA

- Bring us your dreams for changing the world.
- Convince us that your idea does not violate any laws of physics.
- Remember that, at this stage of idea formulation, we are not asking for proof – only for a plausible argument and a robust technical approach for discovering the truth.
- Identify clear demonstrations and metrics that tell us (and you!) that you are on the right track. We are likely to ask you, “If you had the resources right now, what would you do?” If you cannot answer this question right away, then you are not ready.

As you are organizing your thoughts, you will find the “Heilmeier Catechism” to be very helpful. Developed by Dr. George Heilmeier, Director of DARPA in the mid-1970s, these are the questions we ask ourselves about every new DARPA program.

- What are you trying to do?
- How is it done today, and what are the limits of current practice?
- What’s new in your approach and why do you think it will be successful?
- Who cares?
- If you succeed, what difference do you think it will make?
- What are the risks and the payoffs?
- How long do you think it will take?
- What would it take to transition the resulting technology or capability to actual users?
- How much will it cost?

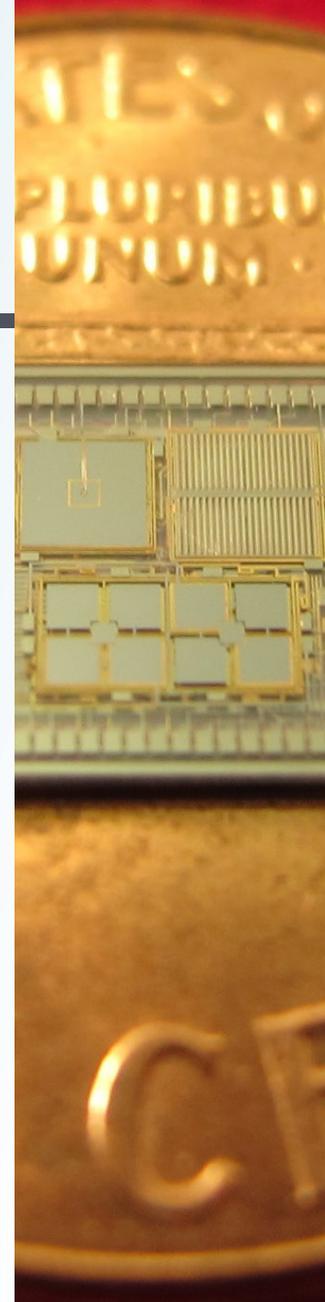


Consider these questions carefully. Initially, we recommend you focus on the first four to help you sort through the challenge you are actually trying to tackle. In addition, we will ask you, “Why DARPA? Why this particular technical office? Why now?” These questions of relevance come up every day in conversations at DARPA.

Thank you for considering how teaming with DARPA can advance your field, and how your work can contribute to national security.



We look forward to your ideas!



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